



Wyoming  
DEPARTMENT OF Agriculture

Matthew H. Mead, *Governor*  
Doug Miyamoto, *Director*  
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*The Wyoming Department of Agriculture is dedicated to the promotion and enhancement of Wyoming's agriculture, natural resources and quality of life.*

August 16, 2017

Melissa Martin  
LaVa Project  
Medicine Bow National Forest  
2468 Jackson Street  
Laramie, WY 82070

Dear Ms. Martin,

Following are the Wyoming Department of Agriculture (WDA) Scoping comments regarding the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) proposing to treat insect infested areas of the Medicine Bow National Forest (MBNF).

Our comments are specific to our mission: dedication to the promotion and enhancement of Wyoming's agriculture, natural resources and quality of life. As the proposed project could affect our industry, citizens, and natural resources it is important that you continue to inform us of proposed actions and decisions and continue to provide the opportunity to communicate pertinent issues and concerns.

The WDA is in full support of the MBNF utilizing the Healthy Forest Restoration Act and analyzing treatments through the Landscape Vegetation Analysis (LaVa) Project. Thousands of acres of timber are dead across the West due to insect infestations. The numbers of burned acres from wildfires increases annually as well. We commend the MBNF in utilizing a pro-active approach to address the changing forest conditions by diversification of age class, inclusion of marketable forest products, addressing human safety, and mitigating hazardous fuel loading. We offer the following comments to consider when analyzing LaVa.

WDA recommend the MBNF consider and analyze the direct and cumulative impacts of the No Action Alternative to livestock grazing permittees:

- Wildfires can kill and displace livestock
- Wildfires will damage range improvements including fences and water developments
- Hazard trees can blow over and kill livestock and damage fences
- Hazard trees are a human safety concern to grazing permittees and range riders throughout the grazing season while managing livestock or repairing fences

WDA also recommends the MBNF work closely with grazing permittees throughout the implementation of LaVa.

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- Allow flexibility to utilize increases in forage post-treatments
- Cooperatively develop vegetation objectives with permittees pre-treatment.
- No mandatory 2-year rest on treatment areas
- Provide adequate notice to permittees where treatments overlap grazing allotments/seasons
- Provide flexibility in season of use and grazing rotations in conjunction with treatments

Vegetation treatments proposed in LaVa will have a positive impact on the MBNF, creating habitat for wildlife, improving forage conditions for livestock, and a safer environment for those who live, work, and recreate across the forest. We look forward to continuing to work with you and your staff on this project. If you have questions, please contact Justin Williams, Senior Policy Analyst at 307-777-7067.

Sincerely,

*for* 

Doug Miyamoto  
Director

DM/jw

CC: Governor's Policy Office  
Wyoming Board of Agriculture  
Wyoming Stock Growers Association  
Wyoming Wool Growers Association  
Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation  
Wyoming State Grazing Board  
Wyoming Association of Conservation Districts  
Wyoming Game and Fish Department  
Wyoming County Commissioners Association  
Public Lands Council